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The Conservative Coalition

VICTOR C. FERKISS

Our Wasted Intellectuals

CHARLES M. HERZFELD

Eichmann and Buber

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

The Lesson of Spain

THE NEWS from Spain these days arouses mixed emotions, particularly for an American Catholic. One emotion would have to be sadness—sadness that so many thousands of Spaniards have been driven by the wretchedness of their lives to strike for a living wage and for some recognition of their grievances, in defiance of the Franco government. And these strikers are only the few who are strong enough and brave enough to stand up to Franco.

It is sad too that so many Spaniards are suffering arrest, imprisonment, exile or worse for their crimes —the crimes of criticizing the regime, forming an association (political parties are illegal in Spain, of course, except for the Falange) or the crime of circulating the encyclicals and social teachings of the Church. Many eminent Catholics are among the number of those who have thus incurred the displeasure of Franco—laymen, priests and even bishops—their chief offense, apparently, that they have tried to act as the Popes have urged us all to act in matters of social justice.

It is sad that the Church in Spain is caught in this unhappy situation. On the one hand, many Catholics and Catholic Action groups are repressed and threatened by Franco for what he calls "meddling in political affairs." Among these so-called "meddlers" are the Young Christian Workers, the Catholic Action Workers Brotherhoods, the priest-directors of these organizations, and even Enrique Cardinal Pla y Deniel, Primate of Spain. Members of these groups—including priests—have been arrested, fined, imprisoned; Catholic publications have been suppressed; the leaders of Catholic Action have been attacked in the government press; Franco has suspended the broadcasting of Mass and religious services over the government radio.

But on the other hand, paradoxically, the Church in Spain is also laboring under the effects of its past identification with the ruling classes and the Franco government. As the Catholic daily published in Madrid recently lamented, the Church is still being represented to the workers as the ally of the rich and Catholics described as pharisees.

Even with all the suffering and danger in Spain today, however, we must also feel hope and even joy that Spaniards are at last reaching out—and apparently with some success—for the freedom and human rights they have been denied, for the means to bring an end to the poverty and exploitation which have traditionally been the lot of the workers there. We must rejoice too that the Church in Spain is finding new vitality and new strength as it takes the Christian message into the lives of the people, as it proves that it is not, as it sometimes has let itself appear, merely the creature of privilege and reaction.

FINALLY, an American Catholic must be struck by the irony of the Church's present plight in Spain. Many Catholic spokesmen, particularly in Latin lands, have for so long held that an identification of Church and State was the ideal; they have for years held up Spain as a model of the Catholic state, and been bitterly critical of the American tradition of separation of Church and State, with its complete freedom for all religions and special status for none. Even many American Catholics have seemed to accept this glorification of the Spanish Church-State concordat, and denounced any criticism of Franco and his anti-democratic government as being somehow criticism of Catholicism.

Now we are seeing the proof of the established-Church system in Spain. As we have long known from history, the Church pays dearly for the special privileges it receives in countries like Spain. As long as the Church is meek, as long as it is content to be an appendage of the government, as long as the teachings of God do not inconvenience Caesar, then the official church, as we have seen over and

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over again, will be honored and privileged by the government it supports. But as soon as the Church takes up its mission to preach and teach according to Christ's commandment, without fear or favor on any side, then its privileges and special arrangements are turned into shackles to keep it from disturbing the defenders of the status quo.

Churchmen in Spain are now complaining that the Franco government is becoming "secularistic" and "anti-clerical." They have good cause for such complaints, but it is grimly ironic that they are made in what used to be praised as a model Catholic State. Of all the lessons to be drawn from the events in Spain, perhaps the most significant is this one—on the much-debated problem of ideal Church-State relations. It is a lesson we commend to American Catholics, and indeed to Catholics all over the world.

Father, Dear Father

AS THE drunkard to the bottle, so the Republican Party seems to be to the "soft on Communism" accusation. "Responsible" Republicans swear off periodically and sometimes manage to go a whole year without reaching for the jug of Old Never-Fail. But then that pre-election fever seizes them, and they decide to pour themselves "just one more."

So it is in 1962. Election time is drawing near, and the G.O.P. seems headed for just one more spree with its favorite high-proof medicine—"good for what ails you at the polls." For instance, the publication of *The Liberal Papers* a few months ago brought a temptation that proved too much for all but the strongest of the G.O.P. Anti-Communists Anonymous. After all, here were essays, by various out-and-out eggheads, that actually argued the desirability of recognizing Communist China, or the necessity of some sort of solution to the Berlin impasse, or the advantages in increased trade with Soviet bloc nations. Furthermore, these papers had been edited by Congressman James Roosevelt, not only an avowed liberal but a proven blood relation of That Man and That Man's wife.

Since James Roosevelt is a Democrat, and the papers had been prepared for study by a group of young Democrats, what could be more logical than describing the views of some of the contributors to the book as the official views of the Democratic Party and the book as a whole as "the Democratic-sponsored surrender plan" (Republican National Chairman William E. Miller)?

Inevitably, one "soft on Communism" charge leads to another. It was no surprise then when the "Declaration of Republican Principle and Policy" went further down the road of "soft on Communism" innuendo with its use of the accusations made contemptible by the John Birchers and others of the Lunatic Right. Carefully dissociating the G.O.P. from these extremists, the Republican committee which drafted the Declaration then went on to repeat word for word the extremists' discredited charge that the Democratic Party was following a "no win" policy toward Communism.

Where all this will end seems only too clear. Senator Dirksen is every day less restrained by the inhibitions of his bi-partisan sobriety; he and his Republican colleagues in Congress have now reached the singing stage—not "Sweet Adeline" but an old G.O.P. spiritual called "Mighty Lak a Red." This time they're serenading just outside the White House, inspired by the fact that Presidential adviser Walt W. Rostow of M.I.T. is reputed to have speculated that the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev may not be the same as it was under Stalin, and has perhaps even wondered if the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. might not work out a way of settling some of their differences short of war. These ideas are rendered by the boys in the G.O.P.'s anti-Communist back room as "a design for eventual defeat."

The worst of it is, though, that November is still a long way off, and the Grand Old Party's party this year may be just getting underway. Well, we read once in an A.A. leaflet that hitting bottom may be a good thing for the compulsive drinker. Then he has no place to go but up.

Trouble in Canada

THE RECENT announcement by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker that Canada has been forced to arrange for over one billion dollars' worth of loans and credit to bolster its economy came, no doubt, as a surprise to most Americans. The facts, unfortunately, are that for some time now Canada has had a deficit in its budget and, even worse, a very bad deficit in its international balance of payments. In the last few months the drain on its supply of

SUMMER SCHEDULE

In keeping with the usual practice, The Commonweal will again appear on alternate weeks from the middle of July to the middle of September. Forthcoming issues will be dated as follows: July 13, July 27, August 10, August 24, September 7 and September 21. From then on The Commonweal will resume its normal weekly printing schedule.

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foreign exchange has been particularly heavy, exceeding, comparatively, even that of the U.S.

In such a situation, it is difficult to see that Prime Minister Diefenbaker had any choice other than to take some drastic, immediate steps to regain Canadian fiscal stability. Among other things, these steps will include a reduction of $250 million in government expenditures, and the reduction in the value of goods that Canadian tourists can bring back duty-free from the United States. But most importantly from the viewpoint of the United States, Canada will raise its tariff rates up to 15 per cent on half of its imports—a step bound to have some effect on our economy.

Since it is obviously to the advantage of the United States that the Canadian economy be stable, we can only hope the Mr. Diefenbaker's emergency moves will be accepted with good grace in this country. Sniping and complaining are likely to do little good. Worse still, they could simply exacerbate Mr. Diefenbaker's very real problems.

Predicting the Council

ONE THING that can be expected, as the opening of the Second Vatican Council approaches, is a rash of predictions and speculations about the results of the Council. This is natural enough, for a combination of secrecy and passionate public interest encourages the prophet and the soothsayer, galvanizes the lover of gossip and provides the enterprising journalist with an irresistible opportunity to create news when relatively little exists.

Were one to chart the temperature of the speculation to date, the results would be mixed. When Pope John XXIII first announced the Council, hopes were very high. But then it became known that the main aim of the Council would be renewal and reformation in the Church. For those who hoped for great ecumenical developments this was something of a disappointment. Within a short time, however, this initial let-down gave way to a new optimism. Who could find a desire for renewal disappointing? Then came *Veterum Sapientia*, the apostolic constitution calling for a renewed emphasis on Latin as the official language of the Church. Once again spirits dropped.

In recent weeks, however, hopes have been rising once more. For one thing, Arcadio Cardinal Larraona, prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, has predicted that the Council will approve an expanded use of the vernacular in the Mass. And his Congregation has just recently announced some important changes in the Baptismal Rite, permitting a wider use of vernacular and more local discretion concerning parts of the Rite. Of course, at about the same time, the Holy See ordered the establishment of a Latin commission in every nation to implement *Veterum Sapientia*.

So what do we predict? We have no predictions at all. And as if to point up the futility of making predictions, even the undercurrents of gossip cancel themselves out. We do think, however, that Bernard Cardinal Alfrink, Archbishop of Utrecht, has a good point in deploring what he terms a "defeatist" attitude in some Western nations about what can be expected from the Council. For the plain fact is that the cross-winds of opinion in the Church are very mixed at the moment.

King of the River People?

CATHOLICS, both priests and laity, on the Lower Louisiana Coast are deeply worried over what will happen at Catholic schools next September. Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes that extend from below New Orleans some one hundred miles down the Mississippi are the absolute domain of the now excommunicated Plaquemines Parish Commissioner, Leander H. Perez, Sr. People in the area fear political and economic reprisals from the man who early backed and tutored Huey P. Long in his tenacious hold over the State of Louisiana.

Over several decades Mr. Perez has managed to fasten a personal and autocratic hold over the political, social, and economic life of the Lower Coast. Men who work for Port Sulphur Company and for the numerous oil companies in this area of bayou and "floating prairie" know that open opposition to Boss Perez can mean loss of job and possible hurt for relatives getting needed social service. Such opposition could also mean loss of special concessions and privileges for shrimp and oyster fishermen, for orange-growers, and for power boat taxis that ply between the levee and "out back" where off-shore and swamp oil drilling goes on.

The Lower Coast presents a curious community of highly competitive nationality groups and color castes. Oldest among the various groups are the old French-speaking families and the Negro villages that pre-date abolition. Dalmatians, or Takos, who control the oyster planting and tonging, are a later immigrant group. Mulatto groups, many of which emigrated from Haiti in the days of Toussaint L'Ouverture hold proudly aloof from the blacks.

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Besides separate white schools, there are two systems for colored. Where blacks predominate, the public and private schools are used by them; and mulattoes get private tutoring from eighth-grade or high school graduates. Where mulatto families outnumber the Negroes, the blacks must build their own separate school, or depend on white tutoring after school hours.

Most mulattoes are Catholic, and in the larger churches try to preempt the center Gospel section, while blacks are forced to occupy the narrow Gospel side section along the windows. Whites take the entire Epistle side in larger places like Buras.

Twenty years ago a newly built movie house displayed two signs at the stairs leading to the peanut heaven: "For Dark Colored" and at the other entrance "For Light Colored." Mulattoes refused the dubious distinction and boycotted the theater.

COLOR agonizes community life, particularly where heavy concentrations of mulattoes live. Much more miscegenation went on between whites and mulattoes a few generations back than many insecure whites will openly admit. Whispering campaigns are common, and cautiously guarded association patterns are rigidly maintained in any public affairs in the Lower Coast community.

The Lower Coast is also a land of gris-gris and remede-makers. Magic and superstition are dying, they say, but many is the Cadillac and many the fine folks who seek out Tante Belle, Nanaan Titi and Uncle Cacoos for cures and for taboos to ward off hexes and curses. With the black candles, nail parings, and blessed water go the inevitable three Credos, three Paters, and the *trois* Aves. Words for spells and remedes spice the native patois.

Before the oil companies and the nutria ruined trapping and hunting, boys of thirteen and fourteen could make a couple thousand dollars in a four-month trapping season. And when the shrimp ("swimps") were running, the luggers were out back in the bays and Gulf. School and church attendance was lackadaisical. In the southern end of the River, there was only the narrow strip of drained land between river levee and swampland levee. Social life for young folks was nonexistent, and most girls married at fourteen or fifteen.

Since oil came in, tax income has gushed and the front and back roads have improved. Compulsory education laws are now far better enforced. Religion, however, still intertwines closely with superstition in many communities. Children must have the water poured (Baptism) and the dead must "pass through" the church. In the past many families broke with the Church because grandpère, who hadn't made his "pâque" (Easter duty) for twenty years, was not passed through the church. Some old pastors compromised: they would open the front church so the funeral cortege might pass in front of the open doors on the way to the above-ground brick burial vaults.

Throughout Louisiana perhaps the heaviest anchor holding back peaceful obedience to Supreme Court desegregation orders has been timidity and downright fright over discussing the moral, spiritual and democratic aspects of the issue. Both anti-clericalism from times past, and deeply ingrained racial traditions, have distilled a fog that baffles reasonable discussion and pulpit education and exhortation. Whether court order and church directives without adequate and free discussion of segregation and discrimination can now succeed remains to be seen.

HOW WILL these Catholic people along the Lower Coast regard the excommunication of "Mr. Leelee?" Those who have tried long to unseat Mr. Perez politically are exultant; the colored, too, will generally be happy. But for many whites who are nominal Catholics there may well be only added awe for the big man at Pointe a la Hache and Belle Chasse who, they say, taught old Huey and Earl their political tactics. At church meetings held several weeks ago, called on the Lower Coast to discuss the Archbishop's directive to integrate, Perez' toadies and henchmen sat stolidly without comment, frightening most well-intentioned parishioners from opening their mouths.

There is in all this a certain sardonic humor. Mr. Perez, who runs the Lower Coast as an unreconstructed political LaFitte, told his television and Citizens for Segregation rally audiences that it wasn't this excommunication business that mattered: It was the over-all democratic problem of the American people having their rightful say against this Communistic business of "moral degradation" which "violates every principle of Christianity." Like all autocrats with practically absolute political and economic power, Mr. Perez has, in his own eyes at least, grown infallible with the years. Opposition to his views is almost negligible. How then, Leander wonders indignantly, could a mere Archbishop try to oppose his racist heresy?

September school opening on the Lower Coast will probably give the final answer to the almost fabled reign of Perez over the River people. One doubts there will be a Canossa, at least now. Browbeaten citizens, however, may possibly hope for help from the financially strong sulphur and oil companies in a political move to crack the monolithic Perez political structure in Plaquemines and St. Bernard. And a final strong factor may well be that ancient native fear of "not being passed" through the Church. In the end this finally may cut down the Titanic to proper pirogue size.

ETIENNE BARROIS

(Etienne Barrois is a Southern journalist with long experience of the Louisiana scene.)

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In Congress the "Third Party" Once Again Holds the Reins of Power

The Conservative Coalition

VICTOR C. FERKISS

ALTHOUGH John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States by the slimmest margin in recent history, pollsters reported after one year of his Administration that an unprecedented seventy-eight per cent of the American people approved of the job he was doing. And yet within a few weeks of this poll one of the most important items on the President's legislative program—the establishment of a Department of Urban Affairs—was defeated in the House of Representatives by a resounding 264 to 150. Since then, maximum pressure from party leaders and the White House has pushed through the Administration's tax proposals with only a few Democratic desertions, and the handling of the steel price controversy has seemingly further enhanced the President's prestige. Nonetheless, seasoned observers still doubt that much of Kennedy's legislative program will pass the present Congress. How is this to be explained?

One answer is that the "Third Party"—the so-called "conservative coalition" of Republicans and Southern Democrats—once again holds the reins in Congress. While a baker's dozen of Republicans supported the President in the Urban Affairs fight, no less than 111 Democrats voted against him. Eleven of these were from the West or Midwest and 15 from the Border states of Missouri, Maryland, Oklahoma and Kentucky; but the hard core of defeat was fashioned from the votes of the Representatives from the Old Confederacy.

Confronted with the power of this conservative coalition, many liberals call for a Presidential showdown with its members, a purge of the Democratic party, or a political realignment to clarify the conflict between this coalition and the rest of the nation. Before the merits of such proposals can be assessed it is important to take a hard look at the origins and nature of the conservative coalition in Congress, and the reasons for its power.

The conservative coalition in Congress dates back to the year 1938, a turning point in American political history. For it was in 1938 that the New Deal died, and the coalition was the instrument of its demise.

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The first Roosevelt Administration emphasized recovery rather than reform. The NRA and AAA were designed primarily to get the nation out of a depression, not to change the shape of American society. But by 1936 pressure from the "Left" (then represented largely by such unlikely figures as Huey Long and Father Coughlin) forced the President to take a more intransigent stand toward vested economic interests. The smashing Democratic election victories of 1936 contrasted with the action of the Supreme Court in declaring key sections of the NRA and AAA unconstitutional made Roosevelt confident that a showdown with conservative elements could be forced on favorable terms.

In 1937 Roosevelt gave battle on the issue of the Court. It is sometimes said that although he lost the battle, he won the war, because, despite Congressional rejection of the President's plan, the Court ceased to veto social legislation. But the battle gave birth to the coalition which has plagued liberal Democratic Presidents ever since. The New Deal—as *ad hoc* politically as it was ideologically—owed its existence to a congeries of forces the Court fight destroyed. The Southern Democrats deserted the Administration on the Court bill, and Midwestern and Western Progressives (both Republican and Democratic) also broke with FDR over the issue, many going into permanent opposition.

The short-lived liberal coalition never could be reconstructed. The recession of 1937-38 gave a final burst of energy to reform, but the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was the last important piece of New Deal legislation ever passed. The sit-down strikes engineered by the new CIO—a favorite of the New Deal—came at the time the Administration introduced anti-lynching legislation, and convinced the dominant elements in the South that a whole way of life was endangered by forces let loose by New Deal innovation.

BUT ALTHOUGH the New Deal suffered a serious beating at the hands of its enemies, in the end it was the victim not of murder but of suicide. By 1938 Roosevelt was deliberately subordinating domestic to foreign policy issues. As he later put it, Dr. New Deal had to be replaced by Dr. Win-the-War. To strengthen his

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hand in foreign policy Roosevelt had to make peace with his erstwhile enemies. Many Midwestern and Western Progressives were isolationists. Isolationism and antagonism toward Communism had also made some inroads into his urban strength, particularly in areas with a large proportion of Catholics. Where could he turn for support?

First of all, to conservative Republicans—from the East especially—whose financial and social ties bound them to Britain. Secondly, to the South, wholeheartedly in sympathy with Britain as a result of long-standing ethnic, social and intellectual ties, and with no immigrant minorities hostile to the Allied nations. With measures such as the renewal of conscription passing the House by only one vote, Roosevelt could not afford to alienate the Southern Democrats. Former enemies were now much-courted friends, and the Administration was grateful for the presence of unreconstructed Rebels in key committee chairmanships. Not only was a truce on issues declared, but a pact was signed on personnel. Roosevelt's legacy to Harry Truman included not only such problems as China, Eastern Europe and the Bomb, but also a Congress in which conservative forces had been deliberately strengthened.

Even in the last years of the Roosevelt era it was apparent that these tactics had been costly. Sensing coming victory, right-wing elements were determined to play a major role in determining the shape of the America to come. The Smith-Connolly anti-labor act was passed over Roosevelt's veto in 1943, with Southern Democratic House members voting to override by a margin of 81 to 2. A tax bill favoring upper-bracket taxpayers was passed over Roosevelt's veto in 1944, with Southern Democrats 64 to 8 against the President.

The full force of the coalition's wrath was reserved for Truman, however. The war had meant frustrations for the business community, the farmers, and much of the middle class. At the same time it had buttressed the economic position of the Negro and organized labor. The Republicans took over Congress in 1946 and, in coalition with the South, sought to reverse by legislation the gains these groups had made during the war. Truman fought back and was elected on a progressive program, but he was unable to control Congress. The result was four years of wrangling which highlighted the power of the conservative coalition.

Perhaps Truman's greatest mistake was in not taking advantage of the unsuccessful revolt of the Dixiecrats in 1948 to purge them from their influential Congressional positions. If so, he paid the price. Southern opposition to civil rights legislation could be taken for granted, and an effective conservative coalition came into being on labor, economic reform and internal security measures. This coalition was victorious in about half of all recorded key votes. Southern Democrats furnished the needed margin for defeating Truman's housing legislation and the Brannan plan for agriculture, and for overriding Truman's veto of the McCarran Immigration Act. In 1952, 36 Congressmen from Southern and Border states actually voted with a majority of the Republicans more often than they voted with their fellow Democrats!

During the first two years of the Eisenhower Administration, the coalition seemed somewhat weaker. With the Republicans in control of Congress, Democratic leaders advocated a policy of "responsibility"—of supporting the half-hearted liberalism of "modern Republicanism." But after 1954 when the Democrats were in the majority, the Democratic leadership found itself in the anomalous position of introducing a series of liberal measures only to see them trampled underfoot by the Southern Democratic-Republican coalition. Federal aid to education and minimum wage legislation provided the occasions for massive opposition by the Southerners to their own party leadership. The most spectacular victory of the coalition came in 1959 with the passage of the Landrum-Griffin act. Seventy-five of the ninety-eight Democratic Southern House members voted to substitute it for the Shelley bill favored by labor, and 95 Southerners voted aye on final passage.

TODAY THE situation which faces President Kennedy is in every respect as difficult as that which confronted Truman, save for Kennedy's greater personal popularity and "respectability." The problem is apparently endemic to the American political system. In order to be elected President a candidate must win the votes of a few key states—eleven will do the job in 1964. These states are overwhelmingly industrial, and ethnic minority groups are extremely important in all of them. Most Senators, too, like the President, represent constituencies with significant urban, labor, and minority elements. But this is less true of most members of the House of Representatives. One can be elected a Representative, even from a primarily industrial state, without ever having to take into account labor or minority group interests. By a strange paradox, the Presidency is gerrymandered in favor of the urban areas—as some advocates of electoral college reform have pointed out—while the Senate and especially the House are gerrymandered in favor of rural interests. Thus increasingly the President is a liberal, the House is conservative, and the Senate in between. Social and ideological differences underline this built-in institutional conflict between the President and Congress.

The strength of the Conservative coalition derives from this basic conflict. Republicans and Southern Democrats have comprised a majority of every House since 1932, with the exception of that elected in the Roosevelt landslide of 1936. Conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats normally have an overwhelming edge both in votes and in control of Congressional

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machinery. There are simply not enough Congressional districts from which liberal Republicans or Democrats are likely to come. In the current House only about ten Republicans out of 174 represent labor, lower class, or minority constituencies. Of 260 Democrats, 90 are from the Confederate states, 40 from Border states. Less than 100 come from urban or industrial areas. The remainder represent the semi-rural West or Midwest. Thus the South and the Republicans together, even without the aid of Border state Democrats, can muster 254 votes out of a potential voting membership of 437.

But even these figures understate the strength of the coalition, for they suggest that all Congressmen are equal, which is obviously not the case. Real power in Congress lies not just in possession of a vote, but in committee power and in informal influence. Seniority is extremely important, and this favors Congressmen from one-party areas such as the South and the rural, normally Republican, North. The most marginal districts are usually those in which liberal Democrats and liberal Republicans frequently unseat one another. This situation is reflected in the control of Congressional committees. Of twenty committees, ten are chaired by Southerners, two by Border state members, eight by "Northerners." In the Senate, nine chairmanships are held by Southerners, one by a Border state Senator, six by "Northerners" (all are actually from the West). The senior Republicans who would take over control of the committees if their party were in power are almost all extreme conservatives. Six of the ten Joint Congressional committees have Southern chairmen. Of the fifteen immensely powerful members of the House Rules committee, five are Southerners and six conservative Republicans—a clear majority. The chairman is the determinedly conservative Howard Smith of Virginia.

Liberal weakness in Congress is further aggravated by the ineptness of liberal leadership, as evidenced by the ineffectual attempt to keep Representative John W. McCormack out of the Speakership. An additional problem is that many putative liberals in the House are members of the "Tuesday-Thursday club," consisting of Representatives of Eastern urban areas who spend much time in their home districts (where they are often the local bosses), commuting to Washington for only part of the week. Because of their other interests and their frequent absences, the amount of leadership and influence they exert is severely limited even though they sometimes have considerable seniority.

PERHAPS THE greatest obstacle of all to Presidential attempts to secure passage of liberal legislation, however, is the fact that most of the American people—particularly those who vote regularly—are not much interested in liberal causes to begin with, something often forgotten by liberal critics of Presidential or Congressional inaction. Since the Southern-Republican coalition is primarily an anti-minority group, anti-labor coalition, it is well to remember the degree to which the labor vote and the Negro vote (outside the rural South, where it is suppressed) are concentrated in a few Congressional districts. Much support for labor and minority causes, especially in the Senate, is at best half-hearted. On many issues both minority groups and labor find they have a number of friends but few dedicated crusaders, while the dynamism all comes from the opposition.

The President must worry about civil rights, housing, minimum wage, and similar issues not merely because he personally believes in their importance, but because key voting groups in key states want him to. But the average Congressman knows in his bones that many of these issues have little appeal back in Podunk or Scarsdale.

Recently certain special factors have aggravated this situation. The character of the Senate—virtually all members of which have some urban and minority group constituents—gives it a more liberal complexion than the House and makes it more sympathetic to the President's programs nowadays. But this only makes things worse in the House. The House, long resentful of the Senate's greater prestige and domination of the headlines, is defying the Senate as well as the President by asserting itself against Presidential liberalism. The untimely death of Speaker Rayburn and the elevation of John McCormack has not made the President's task any easier. The Republicans will stick together under the skillful leadership of Charles A. Halleck—Republican liberals are too tiny a minority to break traces for long; but the Democrats—under McCormack's ineffective and not wholly loyal leadership—may drift apart, and a feudal situation may develop in which each key committee is a kingdom unto itself, ruled by a chairman often hostile to the White House.

Is the conservative coalition's hold on Congress then so tight it cannot be broken? Not necessarily. A Democratic sweep in the North is always possible, unseating even strongly entrenched Republican House members. But this is most likely to happen not through a sudden

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shift in voter attitudes but through a gradual reapportionment of House seats which will reduce the overrepresentation of rural interests. The recent Supreme Court decisions may well speed this process.

The second possibility is a revolt in the South itself. Seeds of such a revolt already exist in Texas and Florida, and any spurt in Negro voting resulting from strongly enforced civil rights laws could make a real difference. On the other hand, if the conservative revolt within the Republican party continues, it too could have the paradoxical effect of weakening the Congressional coalition. In the North it might split the Republicans and throw elections to Democrats. In the South the attempt of Republican conservatives to penetrate this Democratic stronghold may result in splitting liberal and conservative voters and encouraging openly liberal activity by Democrats.

EVEN SO, the course of events in the near future will depend in large part on the attitude of the Administration, and it has so far shown little interest in reforming the Democratic Party in the South or anywhere else. President Kennedy is not by temperament or ideology a reformer. He is a Tory democrat in the Churchillian tradition, which he openly admires. He wants to make the country better so that it will be stronger. His prime objective is to win the cold war with the Communists, and he is ready to subordinate everything else to this end if necessary. For the short run at least he will sacrifice civil rights, aid to education, even medical care for the aged in order to gain a liberalization of our trade policies. These domestic issues have been with us a long time and they can wait a bit longer. Making an adjustment to the Common Market cannot wait. It is vital not only to our own economic health, but as an essential ingredient in ultimate cold war victory.

Thus Kennedy began his probable eight years in office where Roosevelt found himself in 1938. Kennedy does not want to risk loss of support for his military and foreign policy in order to satisfy domestic desires for reform which may lack strong or widespread public support anyway. Kennedy will do the best he can for his domestic program, especially around election time, but priority goes to foreign affairs. If the Southern Democratic-Republican coalition should oppose his policy of strengthening the hand of the Administration in world affairs, he will stand and fight. If, as seems probable, a Congressional majority accepts Kennedy's foreign policy proposals, the conservative coalition is likely to be with us for many years to come.

Laymen and the Council

Our Wasted Intellectuals

CHARLES M. HERZFELD

THESE ARE exciting times in the life of the Church in America, because there are clear indications that the Church is approaching full maturity. The best evidence of this is the mounting ability of the Catholic community to examine its performance and position calmly and objectively and, beyond this, to invite outside criticism and to listen to it with care. It is now possible, perhaps, as it has not been in the past, to draw attention to an important and difficult problem, namely the relation of the laity and the clergy. In one sense there is no such problem; the Church is One and Indivisible. Yet, in another, more mundane, sense the problem has always existed and always will. The entrance into maturity just noted makes it especially important and fruitful to examine some aspects of this question.

It is no longer adequate to discuss this subject simply in terms of the led and the leaders, because we know that the health of the Church depends to a large degree on the creative and stimulating interaction of laity and clergy. In fact, one might well speak of a need for dialogue between laity and clergy, but this term has become an over-worked cliché, and appeal to it has become an easy way to avoid the hard problems. Yet the notion of dialogue suggests to us that we proceed in a spirit of loving and honest examination of whatever issues arise, and that we remain as free from excessive rhetoric as possible. Only love of the Church can motivate an exploration such as this.

The relation of laity and clergy develops as the Church does. Every generation must create its own relationship, and it must try to go beyond the past in understanding, in effectiveness, and in dedication. Laity

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and clergy interact in the Church in innumerable ways and on many levels—spiritual, intellectual, sociological, economic, and so on. I would like to explore here a very special segment of the over-all problem, restricted to the interaction of a small, though distinctive, part of the laity with the clergy, and examine only a few ways of interacting. The group I wish to consider has no name and is not easy to describe. It consists of all who are creatively involved with ideas and with public issues, such as scholars, teachers, scientists, writers and artists, perceptive administrators, leaders in public service. These people are sometimes called "intellectuals" (though rarely by themselves).

In addition, I limit my remarks to those whose formative years came during or after the depression of the thirties, for it is this younger group which faces most acutely the problems to be discussed. (Parenthetically, it is important to note that many members of the clergy are "creatively involved," and from this aspect operate as "lay" persons.)

My basic proposition is this: The relations of the members of this idea and public issue group with the clergy (and hierarchy) are either non-existent, or else (with some exceptions) completely unsatisfactory.

Let me state at the outset that I believe both sides are at fault in the present situation. Further, the problem must be raised now, because it is one of the most important facing the Church in America today, and because, I am convinced, the current atmosphere is sufficiently calm that the chances for contributing constructive criticism on the subject are reasonably good. The problem is crucial because it is precisely from this alienated group that the intellectual and cultural leadership in the Church must come, and it is through this group that the Church must largely speak to the rest of society. If, therefore, this group and the clergy "talk past each other" rather than with each other, we are faced with a problem of the utmost seriousness.

WE MUST improve our understanding of the relation of laity and clergy in many areas, but there are three crucial ones. These are, first, lay competence and responsibility; second, the quality of some contributions to the life of the Church made by the clergy; and last, the potentialities and difficulties of creative interaction between laity and clergy.

Let us look first at the matter of lay competence and responsibility. To do so properly, one must be quite clear that we are in no sense discussing matters of faith and doctrine, but only such questions which lie either in scientific, scholarly and artistic fields, or else in areas of prudential judgment, of practices and habits. Such questions are not decidable by decree; they are "discussable," and should be discussed more freely.

Unfortunately, the fact of lay competence in these matters is not adequately recognized in practice today. This is so in part because of the popularity of a number of mistaken notions. First, it is assumed that any activity called "Catholic" engages the whole Church. Second, it is deemed desirable (even possible) to have a consensus on all matters of intellectual or prudential judgment. Third, it is believed that growth and maturity can come about by fiat. As a consequence of the popularity of these misconceptions, we have recently seen a number of unfortunate events which violated lay competence in wholly "safe" areas. For instance, a "Catholic" lecture series is canceled after external pressure upon the Ordinary because it is "too controversial," and the lay speakers are defamed by implication. A "Catholic" organization of outstanding experts is criticized when it advocates concrete application of ideas entirely consistent with Papal teaching, but which run counter to certain popular myths; the organization is "tamed" and subjected to tighter ecclesiastical control. Resolutions passed at meetings of certain large "Catholic" organizations are written beforehand, at headquarters. Lay professors are "cheap help" who are not given administrative responsibilities in certain educational establishments. Etc.

The point here is not that these examples describe a universal situation, for happily they do not. But they do indicate a pattern of lack of confidence and respect, and of denial of proper independence and responsibility. This pattern exists, in spite of crucially important exceptions, and the pattern has two dreadful consequences. First of all, the movement toward maturity is limited, for one cannot encourage the development of maturity in persons or organizations in this way. They require real freedom as a matter of their nature, enough freedom even to make some real mistakes. And secondly, this pattern ensures that the contact between the Catholics involved and the clergy is perfunctory, for the members of this group don't stand still when this is suggested in areas of their own competence. They know they don't have to; indeed, they must go on. When this rupture occurs, both sides lose enormously; the clergy because it loses intimate contact with one of the most vital forces in the Church; group X, as it might be called, because it becomes too far removed from the sacral, becomes truly "secularized."

LET US look at the quality of some contributions to the life of the Church made by the clergy. Again, we are not dealing with matters of faith and doctrine, but with the care and the depth used by the clergy in discharging its duties toward the laity, particularly toward the members of the group I have labelled "X." The central error here is the notion that the members of group X need no more from the clergy than the rest of the community does. But the opposite is true; members of group X need more help than the rest, and they need better help. Yet, because of this mistaken notion, no

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adequate provision is made for the spiritual life of these people, and in fact the "usual" approaches are sometimes positively harmful for them.

For example, the life of the average parish is not at all at a level which can give members of group X what they need. Sermons are usually built around the cathechism. This is simply not good enough. What these people need, and need badly, is to be preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its glory and mystery. The common, the "liturgical" life is usually limited to the prayers after Mass. This, too, is not good enough. Parish activities, where the featured speaker is a football coach, are not good enough, nor are bazaars, nor novenas. In short, the typical parish life does not help them at all. At best it has no real impact; at worst it provides numerous occasions of sin, together with a great and deep sense of being outcast, and of being abandoned by the Church.

Similarly, the life of the diocese usually ignores the members of group X and makes no real provision for them (again there are important exceptions). For example, who is usually consulted on diocesan problems, or recognized in special ways? Rarely members of group X. Why is the "family of the year" invariably characterized simply by an enormous number of children? Why not, for a change, pick one whose father or mother wrote an important book? Why is it that the annual appeal for funds for the Catholic University of America usually mentions only the training of priests and nuns, and seldom, if ever, its outstanding departments where scholars are trained, research is done, and books are written?

There is something deeply wrong here; a whole dimension seems to be missing in the view the clergy have of their duty. I do not advocate that every pastor be a scholar; quite the contrary. But one must insist that he preach the Gospel, that he be a *pastor*, that he give life. This the members of the "intellectual" group have a right to. Let the hierarchy recognize explicitly and effectively that the members of group X make a unique and essential contribution to the Church and Society, and let them act accordingly. This is only a matter of fairness.

The final and most important point concerns the potentialities and difficulties of creative interaction. It is trite to say that laity and clergy must try to understand each other better, but it is true all the same. The members of group X must realize that the clergy (and the hierarchy) are extraordinarily busy, just as busy as they themselves are. Let them face the fact that the members of the hierarchy administer large and complicated organizations and do this extremely well. Let them remember Gresham's law of public administration: that the urgent problems crowd out the important ones. Let them admit that when some action of the clergy fails to hit the mark, when something "goes wrong," that it is more often this phenomenon, perhaps together with inadequate "staff work," which produced the slip, rather than ill will, or deliberate intent. In a word, let them not make impossible demands.

On the other side of the coin, let the members of the clergy realize that their administrative duties prevent them from being as thoughtful as they themselves would like to be. Let the clergy realize that they do have a pastoral duty to nourish the spirits of these strange "trouble makers," from among whom will come the great books, the discoveries, the music, of the future. Let the clergy realize that when members of group X criticize, this action is not personal, not vindictive, not self-seeking, not destructive. Rather let them see that these people have learned, through a discipline, an ascetic, lasting for many years, that only by the most searching, direct, and pressing questions is the truth ever found, is growth ever attained. Finally, let the clergy wake up to the fact that, to make real contact with group X, the clergy need only strive for its own highest ideals of charity, of selflessness, of service.

IT IS of crucial importance that group X not be left with a feeling of abandonment, nor the clergy with one of resentment. The two must find ways to speak to each other frankly, directly, and publicly. It will not do any longer to curse this problem behind closed doors. The health of the Church in this country is at stake, and only a radical willingness on both sides to look at the problem, and to seek mutually satisfactory procedures for its resolution will help. There are many concrete ways to implement such willingness. These range from informal consultation to the formation of permanent lay advisory bodies set up at various levels of Church organization. They include the encouraging of initiative and independence, and the open discussion of problem areas. Also the encouragement and recognition of members of the clergy close to (or in) group X could be important. But all hinges on this:

Let both the members of group X and of the clergy realize what they are about, that they have complementary roles to play in the life of the Church. Let them both know that they can play these roles adequately only if they strive to be true to their own vocations, to be true to their own ways of life.

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Lay-Clerical Tension

MONSIGNOR John Tracy Ellis has a genius for saying what needs to be said at the right time. I am recently returned from the symposium on "New Horizons in Catholic Thought" conducted jointly by the Thomas More Association and Rosary College—an annual affair in Chicago which I recommend to anyone who can get there. My talk was on the theology of the laity, and in the question period afterward I was struck by the number of references to Monsignor Ellis's recent remarks on lay-clerical tensions. There is no doubt, I think, that his comments struck a nerve among clergy and laity alike and that they will be discussed and debated for months to come, precisely as his remarks on the state of intellectual life among Catholics were a few years ago.

For my part, I found Monsignor Ellis's remarks sensible and moderate. I think discussion of the subject he raised can only help us. But I only hope that everyone who does discuss his comments will take the trouble to read what he really said in the first place. This seems the least Monsignor Ellis has a right to expect.

America has never known the anti-clericalism of some European and Latin American countries. I hope it never will, and I see no signs of any such danger. But I think it undeniable that there is developing a certain amount of lay-clerical tension, and this fact should be faced squarely. The worst thing that could be done would be to try to suppress or discourage efforts at frank speech in this area.

In its root meaning, anti-clericalism is a deadly virus which can be fatal to Catholic life. It involves a denial of the special role of the ordained priest and the central role of the hierarchy. I don't see how anyone can be anti-clerical in this fundamental sense and remain Catholic in spirit and intention.

I don't think this is a problem facing the Church in America. The closest we come to it, I suppose, are those Catholics who refuse to grant the teaching authority of the Church in the social field on such matters as race, economic questions and the like. But even those who say *Mater Si, Magistra No* are not really in the tradition of European anti-clericalism, in my opinion, although I know many priests disagree; to me the flurry of dissent in these matters simply shows that we have done a poor job of showing the relevance of the Church's teaching authority in these areas.

Anti-clericalism, then, no. But some lay-clerical tensions, yes, and I think these are likely to increase rather than disappear in the near future. I don't see how it can be otherwise.

This is an era of great vitality and great change. As Romano Guardini once wrote, the Church today is coming to life in the hearts of men, and it is in this context that the great lay movement developing within the Church has to be viewed.

It is true, of course, that the lack of priestly vocations in some areas makes the need of the lay apostolate more obvious. But the central impetus behind the lay apostolate comes from an enlarged view of the Church, rather than from any specific and passing emergency. The present emphasis on the role of the layman represents a rejection of the notion that the Church is exclusively clerical; it represents a determination to recapture the vision of the Church as the community of God's holy people at work in the world, laymen and clerics together.

In this process, certain tensions are almost inevitable, particularly because of our national history. Despite the presence of a few Catholics at the time of the nation's founding, the Church in this country was an immigrant Church, and the pattern of lay-clerical relations was established in an era when the priest was often almost the only educated person in the parish. This situation has changed long since, as the second and third generation have worked their way up the American ladder, but old habits of thought and behavior are slow to change, even with the best will in the world. It is inevitable that there be tensions and minor crises from time to time.

The presence of reactionary laymen who refuse to accept the teaching authority of the Church does not seem to me the major problem, then. The big problem is to develop informed and apostolic laymen and then to see that they do not run into so many stone walls that they get discouraged and give up. This, I think, is a real and present danger in some parts of the country today.

One modern Pope after another has pleaded for lay participation and lay effort, beginning with Pope Leo XIII. Yet in some parishes and in some dioceses it seems that almost nothing has changed since the days of our grandfathers. This is what many laymen find hard to understand, and to me such resistance to change seems an open invitation to trouble.

It may be that some laymen want things to change more quickly than they can. But this impatience does not come from a spirit of rebellion but out of love for Christ and His Church. It involves no denial of the hierarchical character of the Church; it simply reflects the layman's desire to play his proper role in the Mystical Body—a desire initiated and encouraged by all the modern Popes. To call such a spirit anti-clericalism seems to me to destroy the meaning of the word and to evade the real problem.

JAMES O'GARA

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A Message of Responsibility

Eichmann and Buber

SISTER HELEN JAMES JOHN

WE HAVE been almost literally overwhelmed by the press-reports of the last days of Adolf Eichmann: the grim final fact of his remorseless death and the renewed cross-fire of discussion which preceded that death—questions of legal procedures and possibilities of appeal; the incomprehensible inhumanity of the crime itself; the "Final Solution" of the Jewish question; the almost more inhuman portrayal of the criminal, by counsel for the defense, as simply a conscientious organization man, charged with an unpleasant task and too absorbed in his timetables to hear the screams of his victims. But amidst all this, one voice spoke out in a tone very different from all the others—the voice of Martin Buber.

But *why* we ask? If any one man now living could stand at once as representative of Eichmann's victims and as prophet-defender of the whole range of human truth which the Nazi crimes attacked, Martin Buber is that man. Leader of the German Jews in their spiritual struggle against the Nazis, spokesman to today's world for the Truth which is the age-old heritage of Israel, his life-work has been to proclaim to the world, in his philosophy of I and Thou, the message that truly human existence finds its roots only in responsibility in the deepest sense of that word—the response of man, in all the situations of his life, to the claim laid upon him by his fellow man, by the Truth which confronts him, and by God.

Clearly indeed, Buber's petition in behalf of Adolf Eichmann can only be understood in the context of his total vision of human reality. In all the activities of his long life he has been, in the words of his own definition, an "existential" thinker, one who "stakes his life in his thinking." It has been truly said of him that his life in no way belies his teaching. Higher praise could hardly be offered. When such a man begs that the arch-enemy of his own people be allowed to live, his appeal is deeply, fatefully significant. But to see fully what it signifies, we must see how it springs from his genuinely "prophetic" vision of the life of man, the reality of evil which threatens that life, and man's responsibility to overcome—"to redeem"—that evil.

One thing stands beyond question. Martin Buber could have none of the defense which Eichmann, with the aid of his counsel, had prepared for himself—the reiterated insistence on the powerlessness, the irresponsibility, of the link in the sausage, the cog in the machine. On the contrary, that calculated innocence, defending itself with an organization chart, made Eichmann a strict embodiment of evil as Buber understands it.

FOR THE philosopher of the "Life of Dialogue," the whole meaning of life lies in man's ever-renewed effort to respond, in all the relationships which form his world, to the reality which confronts him. "Love is the responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*. . . . All real living is meeting." He has traced, with delicate perception, the manifold forms of authentic response: the turning of the lover's whole being to the beloved; the teacher's care to lead the pupil to his own meeting with God; the sober and brotherly glance which links two men who share a task in an assembly line; even—and here one thinks, with a shudder, of Eichmann and his timetables—the administrator so regards the multitudes for whom he plans that each of them may, at any moment, confront him "not as a number with a human face, but as a person." And in and through this authentic life of man with man, encompassing but not encompassed by it, there is the personal relation of man to God, the giver of personal life, which gives to human existence its ultimate seriousness. "Happening upon happening, situation upon situation, are enabled by the personal speech of God to demand of the human person that he take his stand and make his decision."

All this means that for Buber's thought evil presents itself precisely in terms of unrelatedness and irresponsibility, as the aimless whirl of undirected human potentialities, the predominance, in the place of real relatedness, of the I-It relation which instead of truly meeting the other converts him into a mere object of detached knowledge or utility. The grievous reality of evil is, then, a direct correlative of the value of relation as the ground of human life. Such is its importance for Buber that Maurice Friedman's comprehensive study was able to take the problem of evil as a guiding theme to draw together the many aspects of the philosophy of dialogue. Moreover, Professor Friedman's study shows,

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in grim detail, how under the press of events the Jewish sage has come to ascribe to evil a greater and greater emotional and ontological reality.

From the very beginning Buber had seen the radical threat to human values posed by "man's lagging behind his works" in the technological, economic and political orders—the inhuman subordination of man to systems and machinery of his own making. In *The Question to the Single One,* published (astonishingly, as Buber himself remarks) in Germany in 1936, he had denounced in their beginnings precisely those evils which the Eichmann trial presented in their grimmest realization: the flight from responsibility which had led to "the present generation's craze for bondage"; the relativizing of truth by the nationalist state which proclaimed "the (real or supposed) life interests of a group as its legitimate and unappealable truth"; the collectivization of persons who sought cover from their own freedom in the "protective once-for-all" of the totalitarian state. In the face of this danger he cried out, with the depth of insight and force of assertion which remind one of the prophets of ancient Israel.

THE NAZI persecution of the Jews was the strict and literal embodiment of evil: the eclipse of God, the ultimate testing of the "Job of the gas chambers." Hitler could be described as "the man in whom the tension between what one is and what one should be is dissolved—the man without conscience." And hardly less radical was the evil which engulfed those who followed Hitler in the flight from responsibility, the evil of the cogs in the machine: ". . . they bring the sacrifice faithfully: in the realm of Moloch honest men lie and compassionate men torture! And they really and truly believe that brother-murder will prepare the way for brotherhood! There appears to be no escape from the most evil of all idolatry." Here Buber has put his finger upon the diabolical irony which allowed a man who had transported six million Jews to their death to absolve himself of anti-Semitism—but at the price of his own inward claim to humanity!

Buber's petition, then, could not be traced to any delusions concerning the man's fearful guilt. But neither could it be rightly understood in terms of moral principle or religious faith, as orthodox Jews or Christians understand those terms. To be sure, Buber had explained his attitude by a citation of the Law, Thou shalt not kill. And in his appeal to Ben-Gurion, he had recourse to reasoning strongly reminiscent of the natural-law moralists: society is composed of persons; if it kills a man, it is destroying a part of itself. "Who gave society the right to kill itself? Society does not have such pleni-potentiary rights." But to regard either the citation of Scripture or the analysis of the essence of society as an adequate explanation of Buber's personal attitude and action would be to re-fashion to our own liking the foundations of his ethical and religious thinking.

Buber himself, for all his insistence upon the objectivity of moral values, refuses to grant to ethical norms any absolute validity in themselves. Their importance, on the contrary, lies in the fact that they symbolize a claim which becomes absolute only in the concrete situation in which a man stands in dialogical relation to his Thou. "Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding." The command taken in itself speaks only in the third person, addressing "the each and the none." Only when it rises out of the concrete relation in which a man must act, not as an objective standard but as the response of his own inner being, does it acquire absoluteness. The norm draws its validity from the situation.

Similarly, Buber's religious faith in the Bible is *heretical* in the pristine etymological sense of that term; his faith is a subjective personal response which he sees as allowing him to distinguish, and so to *choose,* in the Old Testament, between the human and the divine, "the manufactured and the received." This attitude is strikingly expressed, precisely with reference to the taking of life, in his account of his reflections on the Biblical story of Saul and Agag. After an account of a conversation in which he sets before us as an ideal the observant Jew who yet "when he has to choose between God and the Bible chooses God: the God in Whom he believes, Him in whom he can believe," Buber continues with his own reaction to the story. The Old Testament mingles divine revelation and human construction. "We have no objective criterion for distinguishing between the two; we have only faith—when we have it. Nothing can make me believe in a God who punishes Saul because he did not murder his enemy."

All this means that, much as for ourselves we might desire to, we cannot interpret Buber's thought as a consequence of religious doctrine or moral principles; his insistence that situation must give validity to the command, that faith must choose for itself in the pages of the Scripture, entails a rejection *in radice* of doctrine and principle as the authentic expressions of God's claim upon man.

HERE OUR effort to grasp the meaning of Buber's thought and action has come, in a sense, full-circle; it has brought us back from the horizons of divinely revealed truth or eternally valid logic to the personal viewpoint and vision of the philosopher himself. And yet, despite the radical subjectivity of Buber's position (a Jewish critic recently described him as a "religious anarchist"), his point of view is a lofty one, not arbitrarily chosen, and his vision is a vision of reality. That this is so bears witness to the man himself, to the authenticity of his relation to his fellow man and to the One living God.

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Here too we find the answer, I think, to our original question—what is the meaning of Buber's plea for mercy for Eichmann, the symbol while he lived of the most fearful evil which confronts man today? We ask the question now not for the man whose ashes have been scattered to the waves, but for ourselves, who take up life again with a new realization of the degradation of which the human spirit is capable.

Perhaps the answer is best expressed in Buber's own words spoken to a young American writer as the trial in Jerusalem piled horror upon horror. Hugh Nissensen reports the conversation: "Jacob and the angel," he repeats, "yes . . . The Jew does not admit a dualistic explanation of evil, the demonic derives from God, and so it seems that with Jacob it is the Almighty Himself who attacks us, implicates us . . . and yet, and again, we must not rationalize too much, for this is the mystery, the real duality, that man was created as he is to begin with, with a self-consciousness, and a will of his own that may act in opposition to God."

Here Buber speaks not for himself alone, but from the heart of Hebrew tradition, from a lived confrontation with the God Who "wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live on." Evil and guilt are grievous realities in the life of man; but they are not absolute, not irredeemable. "The Hebrew Bible is concerned with the terrible and merciful fact of the *immediacy* between God and ourselves. Even in the dark hour after he has become guilty against his brother, man is not abandoned to the forces of chaos. God Himself seeks him out, and even when He comes to call him to account, His coming is salvation." The plea made for Eichmann was grounded, not in any denial or diminution of his guilt, but precisely in the recognition, as Buber understands it, of the fact of guilt and its meaning.

Now the time of mercy for Eichmann is past. But what of us, the living? We too were meant to share in the mercy which Buber asked for Eichmann. Perhaps the strongest of the arguments which he urged in his interview with Ben-Gurion was that the death of a single man not be allowed to stand as a sort of easy, vicarious expiation for the guilt of the whole generation which witnessed—and did not prevent—the crimes of National Socialism. "We who are living today know in what measure we have become historically and biographically guilty. That is no feeling and no sum of feelings."

The peculiar horror of Nazism—and it is a quality which seems to permeate our age of mass-movements and machinery—was the implication in its crimes of vast numbers of "innocent bystanders," who become guilty precisely in that they evaded the responsibility of resistance which the hour laid upon them. This has been brought home to us of late, with bitter vividness, in the recent researches of Gordon Zahn and Mother Mary Alice Gallin. And it has nowhere been better expressed, I think, than in the words of Elie Wiesel, a survivor himself of Auschwitz and Buchenwald: "If the trial was important—and I for one believe it was—it was because by reviving the past it was able to demonstrate how a crime could spill over and outward, and splash its guilt onto those who thought themselves to be standing at a safe distance."

But the realization of guilt is only the beginning of the claim which is now laid upon us. Here we recognize the impossibility of recalling the past; we cannot remount the torrent of time to undo what was done. "The bearer of guilt is visited by the shudder of identity with himself. I, he comes to know, I, who have become another, am the same." The guilty evasion of the past cannot be wiped out; but the present hour lays its fresh claim upon us. This claim, as Buber points it out to us, is that those who are guilty should "collaborate" with God in the redemption of evil, gathering into their reponse the whole "whirl of aimless human potentialities" which evil is, and by this response should "serve God with the evil impulse," by permeating all of life with responsibility and direction.

To achieve this restoration of the human order of relationships which our action or failure to act have injured, we must not only persevere in the acceptance of guilt, but take also the road of reconciliation. "Reconciliation means here, first of all, that I approach the man toward whom I am guilty in the light of my self-illumination—insofar as I can still reach him on earth—acknowledge to his face my existential guilt and help him, insofar as possible, to overcome the consequences of my guilty action . . . And this can happen, naturally, only out of the core of a transformed relationship to the world, a new service to the world with the renewed forces of the renewed man."

If the trial and death of Eichmann had any meaning for us now living, it was to impress upon us the strict necessity of this renewal—the renewed response to the claim which is laid upon each of us in each hour of history, the claim whose fateful urgency has been the burden of Martin Buber's message to the world.

The Winged Horse

A giant stallion leaped into the tongueless sky of satellitic scars
And galloped beyond the iced and jutting peaks of this earth
Out towards his cold and breathless home among the stars,
While whispered words of man sounded in his erected ears
Fairy tales of loves and wars.

WILLIAM J. HALLIGAN, S.J.

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THE SCREEN

Tired Blood

THE STUDIOS are releasing their usual package of summer comedies, most of them lightweight stuff. But this summer the tired plots seem lighter than ever; and while the pictures are well loaded with stars, no one connected with the projects seems particularly enthusiastic about his work.

Telling the story of four suburban men who rent a pad in town where each of them can spend a night with their housekeeper-companion, "Boys' Night Out" (MGM) is an unrealistic farce that never can make up its mind whether it wants to be a light comedy or a half-serious satire on the ineptitude of the American male. Some of the lines are funny, and the cast try hard enough, but they don't get too much help from the story or director Michael Gordon. James Garner, as an eligible bachelor, and Tony Randall, Howard Duff, and Howard Morris, as his three married pals, are easily taken in by Kim Novak, who wouldn't fool anybody posing as a "housekeeper-companion" but is really supposed to be a sociology student writing a thesis on the adolescent sexual fantasies of the adult male. Her homework with the boys is childish and silly. And when the plot drags in the wives (Janet Blair, Patti Page, Anne Jeffreys) it only gets longer and sillier.

GOING EVEN farther in its attempt to be daring, "That Touch of Mink" (Universal) falls even flatter. Cary Grant, still charming although acting as if he'd been through this routine so often he's bored with the whole thing, plays a millionaire bachelor who works harder luring Doris Day to Bermuda and other places than he did to make his millions. Miss Day is cute and pert as the girl attracted to Grant's charm and millions, but she's no longer the naive, twentyish kid the role calls for; and The-Moon-Is-Blue type of humor seems more than a little forced at her age. "Mink" is loaded with jokes, more verbal than visual—except for one wonderful shot of Audrey Meadows, as an Automat employee, slapping Gig Young's face through a food slot. Some of the jokes have an unpleasant taste, particularly those built around Gig and his analyst who thinks Gig has a yen for Grant. Most of "Mink" is thin, unsophisticated stuff—with some handsome color photography that tries to cover up the empty story.

ALSO RATHER time-worn is "Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation" (20th Century-Fox) which stems from a novel by Edward Streeter about family togetherness while on a holiday. The father (nicely played by James Stewart) loves his four kids, who include two married daughters, a younger daughter ashamed of her teeth braces, and an adolescent son interested only in TV; but father would really like to take a good vacation with just his attractive wife (made very attractive indeed by Maureen O'Hara). Mrs. Hobbs is very sentimental and all for togetherness, so Mr. Hobbs find himself on the Pacific beach in a weird old house right out of Charles Addams and surrounded by the entire family including two sons-in-law and three pampered grandchildren. Mr. Hobbs, becoming the man-of-all-work and the butt-of-all-jokes, has little time left for fun or to read *War and Peace*. Producer Jerry Wald let his movie run too long, but some of it is amusing, some rather touching like the father-son and father-daughters scenes, and much of it obviously a rehash of old themes.

DECIDEDLY NOT novel is the plot of "My Geisha" (Paramount) which is about a Hollywood husband-and-wife team. He is a director, and she is an actress who has starred in all his films. He feels he must prove himself without her, so he plans to make "Madame Butterfly" in Japan with an unknown in the lead. So his furious wife scurries off to Japan, disguises herself as a geisha girl, and gets the role—all of which puts their once-happy marriage on the rocks. If this sounds somewhat like "The Guardsman" in reverse, you're right. Unfortunately, scriptwriter Norman Krasna doesn't have Molnar's wit, and the plot plods along rather limply. The movie does have a bright performance by Shirley MacLaine as the actress who fools her husband and is quite convincing as the geisha; and producer Steve Parker, who made much of his picture in Japan, has treated us to some lovely color photography of the towns, country and people. Director Jack Cardiff, who usually uses his camera well, fell so in love with these locations that he neglected his cast. "My Geisha" moves too slowly; and the performances of Yves Montand, as the husband, Edward G. Robinson, as the producer, and Bob Cummings, as Shirley's co-star who falls in love with the pretend-geisha, are rather routine. If "My Geisha" had been speeded up and shortened, it might have been acceptable.

ANOTHER TROUBLE with movie makers is that they never know when to leave well enough alone. Those "Road" pictures with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby have been fun in the past—but by now we've had it. Ready or not, the hard-working stars turn up in "The Road to Hong Kong" (United Artists), a tired affair that tries to cash in on somewhat-stale, somewhat-risqué jokes and winds up wearily looking for somewhere else to go. I hope these two comedians, who can still be great fun, don't take to the road again. This attempt does have one brilliant scene in which Peter Sellers, unbilled in the film, does a first-rate take-off of himself as the Indian doctor in "The Millionairess." Maybe this new blood is just what the movies need. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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CORRESPONDENCE

"The Private Conscience"

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: I've only just read Gordon Zahn's excellent article in your March 30th issue, "The Private Conscience and Legitimate Authority," and I hope it's not too late to add my congratulations to the others you must have received.

As Mr. Zahn notes, when I published "The Responsibility of Peoples" in 1945, the world had only learned a few months earlier of the Nazi death camps for the extermination of the Jewish people, and normally decent and sensible people were beginning to talk about punishing the Germans en masse for the crimes they had, it was alleged, collectively committed. But things have changed and now I agree with Mr. Zahn that we must combat the opposite thesis: that no Germans except a handful of top Nazis were morally responsible for the Hitlerite atrocities. The opposite thesis, but the two are united by a disregard for what I think is the only basis for moral judgment, namely, that the individual is responsible only for his own specific actions, as I argued, but that, as Mr. Zahn says, he *is* responsible for these.

The same kind of fuzzy thinking that tried to indict the German people as a whole for actions only a small minority took or (until the end of the war) even knew about, this now accepts—again taking the individual as a mere cell of the body politic—the fiction that an Eichmann was "only obeying orders" and that the responsibility for his actions must be put on his superiors, who also were only obeying orders, etc., until finally only Hitler is left to bear the guilt.

No. All Germans were not guilty but some were, those who knowingly played a part in the Nazi atrocities, and that includes State Secretary Dr. Globke. In my essay, I quoted, from a remarkable article by Hannah Arendt in *Jewish Frontier* of January, 1945, an interview an American correspondent had with an official of a death camp who had been captured by the Russians:

> Q. Did you kill people in the camp? A. Yes.
>
> Q. Did you poison them with gas? A. Yes.
>
> Q. Did you bury them alive? A. It sometimes happened.
>
> Q. Did you personally help to kill people? A. Absolutely not. I was only paymaster in the camp.
>
> Q. What did you think of what was going on? A. It was bad at first but we got used to it. [People can get used to *anything*. This is the most depressing thing I know about human nature. —DM]
>
> Q. Do you know the Russians will hang you? A. (bursting into tears) Why should they? What have I done?

"These words ring true," I commented. "What had he done indeed? Simply obeyed orders and kept his mouth shut. It was what he had *not* done that shocks our moral sensibilities . . . It is not the law-breaker we must fear today so much as he who obeys the law, and the Germans have always been noted for their deep respect for law and order."

Moral responsibility is an individual affair and cannot be shifted either to the collectivity or to the boss, as that admirable peasant Mr. Zahn quotes understood and as his bishop and his chaplains did not. It is exhilarating that such people have existed, and let us hope still exist. That Austrian peasant, insisting on the primacy of his own conscience against the threats of his State and the sophistries of his Church, almost makes one believe that God's creation of mankind—or was it the Devil's?—may not have been such a bad idea after all.

My only criticism of Mr. Zahn's article is that he did not give us the text of that pencilled essay on Irresponsibility which this wise and heroic man wrote just before his execution.

DWIGHT MACDONALD

Federal Aid

Uniondale, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Your attempts to extricate yourselves from the federal-aid mire are bearing fruit, since some of your critics are, without a doubt, absurd. But may I press this demurrer: Of course you did not challenge the bishops' apostolic authority; but your choice of words approached an insult to their integrity. I refer particularly to the passage ". . . cast themselves as a minority pressure-group, trying to win special legislation by strategic, balance-of-power influence on legislation involving the general welfare." The implication is sinister; and it is false. It smacks of the *Christian Century* rather than The Commonweal. The bishops' stand

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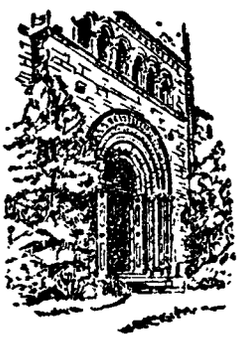

Prospective students should make early application

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represented a practical decision they judged necessary if they were to fulfill their apostolic mission, the evangelization of the world, and its corollary—the Christian education of youth. You may disagree with its wisdom; but, at the same time, your choice of words should exhibit a proper deference for the assembly of the American bishops. I do not think it did.

Your own opinion on the federal-aid dispute is carefully stated. I respect it, but think that it represents, in the final analysis, a "have-your-cake-and-eat-it" position. If massive federal aid goes to public schools only, then our Catholic schools will begin a massive retreat, as far as their ability to serve any significant portion of the Catholic population is concerned. As one who has been a parish priest and worked with children in the parochial and public schools and in the Confraternity program, I fear the consequences of such a retreat both for the Church and for the whole of American society.

Let us have not only a reiteration of your disagreement with the bishops; let us have your solution to the problem. (*Rev.*) DANIEL S. HAMILTON

Latin in the Liturgy

McClusky, North Dakota

TO THE EDITORS: I could not disagree more with Miss Alice Farrell's comment [The Commonweal, June 8] on James O'Gara's defense of the vernacular cause. It may be a strange paradox that a priest should take such a position—for the vernacular—against a laywoman who defends Latin!

Having had some few years of experience, first as an assistant in a city parish, and now being the pastor of a sprawling rural parish, I can assure Miss Farrell that the type of course in liturgical Latin that she envisions would be, first of all, quite inadequate to help people to participate intelligently in Latin worship; and, secondly, would in my opinion interest only the elite, thus creating a sort of 20th century Gnosticism.

The people we as priests need most to contact and help are those marginal Catholics, some of whom continue coming to Holy Mass—but are little impregnated with Catholic ideals. It is difficult even to get them to come to Mass on Sundays, to say nothing of extra, classroom sessions during the week. Thank God for their Faith, but the question remains what can we do to strengthen it? These people need to be taught religion, not Latin.

Active participation in the great Christian Mysteries must become the "primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit," but it seems to me that St. Pius X intended that this be intelligent and enthusiastic participation, neither of which seems possible to me for the vast majority of Catholics if all must be done in Latin. Pius XII left the door open, in his September 1958 document, for "indirect" participation with vernacular prayers; for example, during Gloria, Creed, Sanctus, Agnus Dei. Why don't we utilize these more widely? (*Rev.*) JAMES SCHUMACHER

"Cold Peace and Cool War"

Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS: Miss Morrissett's comparison of Sweden and Israel [June 1] concludes with the conjecture that the sacrifice of a few dunams of Israel territory to her avaricious neighbors might be a reasonable and fitting gesture. However, the Arab states, with their three million square miles of territory, have publicly avowed time and again that they intend to destroy Israel with her eight thousand square miles anyway, come what may. Only recently, Nasser's government radio announced that he "intends to exterminate Israel by means of the refugees." This can be the only significance of any such gesture suggested by Miss Morrissett. CHARLES CANNER

The Arms Race

St. Louis, Mo.

TO THE EDITORS: If anything can rouse us, your May 18 issue ("The Arms Race and Christian Obligation") should.

I think some of us realized the implications of the atom bomb attack on the Japanese cities. I remember how my heart sank as I thought: "How can we ever see peace again?" To me it has always seemed an unnecessary, immoral act.

Many will recall Msgr. Ronald Knox's book *God and the Atom*, published soon after the bomb attack, in which he condemned the attack, stating that the same result could have been achieved by the blowing up of a mountain, or some such procedure, without injuring the population. GENE MULLANEY

APPEALS for literature: Rev. Raymond F. Maher, C.S.Sp., Sacred Heart Secondary School, Box 566, Aba, Eastern Region, Nigeria, and Ian Travers-Ball, S.J., De Nobili College, Poona 6, India, would be grateful to any subscribers who send them their used copies of The Commonweal periodically. Mrs. Dorothy W. Lehnis, 1404 Franklin, Danville, Ill., has an extensive list of mission-land seminaries, libraries, hospitals and Catholic information centers that also would appreciate shipments of useful reading material.

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Nabokov the Virtuoso

Pale Fire. By Vladimir Nabokov. Putnam. $5.00.

by Richard McLaughlin

ARCHMANIPULATOR Nabokov's bag of tricks appears to have no bottom, or at least it would appear so on reading his latest divertissement; it makes even his Kafkan novel, *Invitation to a Beheading,* look like mere child's play. But just what *has* Mr. Nabokov conjured up this time: a snare for academic diggers—a clever obstacle race for the exegesis boys in the universities?

If only pinning him down were that simple. He is not for nothing the subtlest novelist writing in English (one of his adopted tongues). Russian-born Nabokov's current tour de force—calling it a novel is no less arbitrary—has almost as many layers of meaning as an artichoke has petals. Still, he can always perk up the most laggardly reader; for when he isn't titillating the eclectic-minded he is pandering to salacious appetites or, being a master of innuendo and the double-entendre, doing both at the same time. Moreover, as if obliged to compete with his sensational *Lolita,* he again plays the subversive role of a pseudo-cupid—performing the function of one of those "plump hairless little devils whom Satan commissions to make disgusting mischief in sacrosanct places." The pursuit of faunlets, rather than nymphets, furnishes a ribald accompaniment to the book's motif—the obsession of Dr. Kinbote, Nabokov's hero-commentator, with getting his sad royal jester's tale told at all costs.

And where is this dazzling virtuoso performance delivered, and how? Within the framework of a literary exegesis which is anything but stuffy in the deft hands of its designer. As for the locale, it is continually shifting between the "green Arcady" of a New England college campus and "Zembla, a distant northern land," an enchanted kingdom that calls to mind the dream world of mad Ludwig of Bavaria. This gives Nabokov the dual opportunity of dispatching with customary savagery the "timorous fools and trim blockheads" that invariably pop up on faculty staffs and raising, hyperbolically speaking, Zembla's iron curtain, "baring a painted one, with nymphs and nenuphars."

Is Dr. Charles Kinbote a deluded fantast or actually the last king of Zembla, as he goes to such pains to prove? We will never know for sure, thanks to Nabokov's penchant for riddles. At any rate, Kinbote has undertaken the editing and publishing of "Pale Fire," a poem by his late departed friend, John Shade, a distinguished old bard who has always been rated "just behind (one oosy footstep) Frost." As Kinbote reminds us in the foreword, he is the commentator and therefore does have "the last word." But it takes no time at all for doubts to crop up. We are told that his project has met with plenty of opposition, both from the poet's widow, Sybil, and the two faculty members who are acting as co-editors in her behalf. There is only Kinbote's word, too, that the poem was ever entrusted to him.

As it is, the poem, written in heroic couplets and divided into four cantos, turns out, much to Kinbote's dismay, to be a somewhat skittish autobiographical fragment in "a neo-Popian prosodic style." Eschatological intimations and bursts of contrapuntal pyrotechnics, puns and all, are evident, but not a single reference to the King of Zembla's tragicomic story. It soon becomes plain that, despite all claims to the contrary, Kinbote was barely tolerated by his neighbors, the Shades.

And what of his tale of attempted regicide, of Gradus, the bungling assassin who shoots the poet Shade by mistake? Isn't this, too, just more ravings of a beguiling but addlepated pundit? Shade, for all we know, may have had enemies, somebody may have had it in for anyone composing heroic couplets. One thing is certain: Mr. Nabokov intends to have his readers work hard to find the key to this elaborately complicated puzzle. And there is no way of knowing how many keys we may have dangled before our eyes before we've finished.

Scintillating, brilliantly inventive, a satirist and a poet with equal ease, Vladimir Nabokov almost convinces us that his art is nothing but sleight-of-hand. This is not so. Strip away the facetiae, the elegantly phrased but deliberately planted ambiguities, and there is still the true artist here who can, to quote from his book, "pounce upon the forgotten butterfly of revelation, wean myself abruptly from the habit of things, see the web of the world, and the warp and the weft of that web." Kinbote's tale, with all its European patina contrasted with the sharp utilitarian mind of the New World, may also be as much a lament of the exile as a slyly naughty myth for libertines.

Descartes' Legacy

The Integrating Mind. By William F. Lynch, S.J. Sheed & Ward. $3.95.

by Michael Novak

WILLIAM F. Lynch is a man in whom the beliefs that have created Western civilization are alive. When he writes about man in America, the intellectual and society, the theater and human sensibility, as he does in this slim book, he cannot help exhibiting the qualities of mind that characterize the Western tradition. He does not write well; this book, like his others, is rough-hewn, alternating folksy and stickily abstract passages with incisive and felicitous ones. But since there are so few men whose concerns are our own but whose roots go back much deeper than that superficial Enlightenment from which our age is weakly nourished, the substance of what he says atones for his style.

"I shall never forgive Descartes," Pascal said, aware that the bent of intelligence for generations to come would starve the Western inheritance to a shadow. Father Lynch is joining Pascal's battle. The seven chapters of *The Integrating Mind* represent an epistemological effort to halt and heal the ravages of the

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Cartesian mind: the pursuit of the clear, the total, the univocal, the unqualified. The modern inclination, on the part of positivist and romantic alike, is to seek a pure position, pure objectivity or pure subjectivity, and to re-create the world in one or the other category. No wonder that anxiety arises when the pure bared ego is isolated from the flesh and the complex world which would nourish it. No wonder we are anxious, when we insist on an infinite we cannot have, where we cannot have it.

The integration which Father Lynch encourages is not univocal. He is writing for a large audience, not for specialists, and one of the main failures in integration he sees is the sundering of the intellectuals from the people. "When a man leaves the people, he becomes an atheist," Dostoyevsky said. More radically, such a man no longer thinks as a man but as an observer standing off from the world. In this inhuman position, even his best efforts only further the building of an inhuman world in his own image, so that his intelligence—far from integrating him into the harmony of the universe—becomes finally an affliction.

Our theater becomes a theater of alienated introspection, not of a community of men engaged in common action. Our image industries engage themselves in covering up our hollowness; their spokesmen say that they know what the people want—and of course in the softest and least-resisting part of their being the people offer confirmation. Thus the moral and religious strength of character that once marked the American town and tenement is poured out on rocks. The artistic and the intelligent in their purity surrender the people —often their own parents—to the "realistic" men, the hucksters. And since this is because the "realism" of the intellectuals and the artists is itself inhuman, itself only a more sophisticated *divertissement*, the Cartesian mistake turns them, too (as Ionesco saw), into rhinoceri.

What Father Lynch seems to mean then by integration is that intelligence has to clothe itself again with sensibility; that the observer must put himself back into the complexity of the historical stream; that the subjectivist needs to learn that each thing calls for its proper response, which is not to his whim; that the artist and intellectual must realize that knowing is a human, not merely an intelligent, act and that as knowers they are primarily men, part of humanity, not isolated pure egos. The great insight of Father Lynch is that understanding is the keynote of the universe, supple and ambiguous and rich; and that the intelligence that enters into the world *on the world's own terms* finds the riches that can be discovered in no other way.

Further Father Lynch has seen that Christian faith is thin and sick without this approach to the universe. Where man is injured, or the world, Christianity suffers. The Redeemer came for *this* world, limited and concrete and broken as it is; *this* is God's masterpiece, not a never-tested, never-actualized ideal ore. The Christian who bewails the individualistic, legal lapse from grace, but not the deep cultural sickness that grips and shakes us, strains the gnat, swallowing the camel. Father Lynch is one of the few American priests who seems to understand.

He is certainly correct in seeing that the root of our anxiety is an epistemological mistake, a destructive approach to ourselves and to the world; and he offers leads to those interested in correcting that mistake in themselves. But he is not nearly hard enough on his peers. There are few religious men and women, few theologians and philosophers who can be regarded as men in whom the Western tradition is living. Some have the right words, and many are catechized in the objections to modern mistakes. But they are men without life, and whatever they touch turns dead, legalistic and verbal. Custodians of the tradition, they taught *Descartes* and stimulate his progeny. Father Lynch is exceedingly merciful to them, but we who are younger and less gentle want to be more unsparing about distinguishing the living wood from the dead, so that those who turn from the new Cartesians won't fall into the hands of the old.

The Realism of Isaac Singer

The Slave. By Isaac Bashevis Singer. Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy. $4.95.

by Richard M. Elman

OF THE FOUR novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer which have thus far been translated from Yiddish, only one, an early work, *The Family Moscat*, has the superficial complexity and structure of the contemporary European novel. Singer's other long works, including his newly published novel *The Slave*, are more skillful fictions which demonstrate a narrative craftsmanship unique to the contemporary literary scene, but they carefully avoid contemporary subject matter, locating themselves in the earlier literary traditions of the moral fable, the parable, the simple tale told naturalistically but having elements of fantasy and the supernatural.

Singer can begin a story by having the devil speak in the first person, or he can proceed to the allegorical, as in *Satan in Goray*, introducing elements of the natural world along the way as frightening commonplaces. In either case, the burden of disproof rests squarely with the reader, since both the supernatural and the natural are always vividly realized in fictional terms. By seeming to remove us from the contemporary, Singer uses his disciplined prose to pose various questions concerning God and men while, at the same time, avoiding two of the most obnoxious elements of much Yiddish literature—a heavy-handed "social consciousness" and a bitter-sweet nostalgia. In *The Slave* he has once again demonstrated his sophisticated mastery of all these various strategies.

The Slave is a love story, describing what one might crassly call the hazards of inter-marriage in terms of the remote but energetically drawn rural landscape of seventeenth-century Poland. The moral reverbera-

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tions of Singer's title are not accidental. His protagonist, Jacob of Josefov, has been enslaved by Polish peasants (after Chmielnicki and his Cossacks had uprooted and destroyed his town and family) only to discover through the ordeal of falling in love with the gentile girl, Wanda, that both slavery and freedom are largely voluntary actions, having little finally to do with external circumstances.

Thus when Jacob is ransomed by the remnants of the Jewish community of Josefov, he learns that his period of slavery has not ended. Freedom has brought with it an obligation to Wanda, whom he had converted to Judaism against the law of both the gentile and the Jewish communities. Early in the novel Singer writes of Jacob: "Circumcision was the only sign on his body that he was a Jew." But as Jacob becomes more involved with Wanda as a person rather than an object it becomes clear that his one defining mark has been accepted by him as an article of faith, something that may set him apart from his fellows and allow him to make distinctions.

"The more he reflected on the question perplexing him, the clearer it became that no one could advise him," Singer explains. "He (Jacob) was familiar with the law. Would he find a man anywhere who could determine the authenticity of a vision or who could weigh in the scales which was the greater transgression, the abandonment of one's issue to the idolaters or the conversion of a woman lacking a true vocation? Once again Jacob remembered the saying, 'Something done selfishly may end up as a godly act,' and argued accordingly. Cakes, candies, and almonds were given a child starting cheder to encourage him to love the Torah. Didn't one speak of a convert as new-born? Who could know all the motives of those who had become Jews in the past? No saint was entirely selfless. *Jacob decided to take the sin upon himself and instruct Wanda in the tenets of his faith . . .*"

In an age such as ours when the observance of the so-called "rule of law" seemed more important to many spectators at the Eichmann trial than the behavior and the consequences of the behavior of the man on trial, Singer's subtle exemplum stuns us with its realism. Through Jacob and Wanda he has affirmed his belief in consequences, and the truth that even though one is confronted with ambiguities and choice seems hazardous it is still possible to choose and to err. Singer is too good a writer to present us with a homily on the subject, but he makes us see that the career of a moral man is a slavery which can only be resolved by death.

Man's Personal Relation to God

Sin. By Marc Oraison and others. Transl. by Bernard Murchland, C. S. C., and Raymond Meyerpeter, O. S. B. Macmillan. $4.50.

by Quentin Lauer

AT A TIME when the very notion of sin is being systematically soft-pedaled in the name of health and sanity, it is refreshing to read a book which frankly acknowledges that man's deliberate refusal of God's love is a reality. Sin, the authors tell us, is to be taken seriously, but it is to be understood not in moralistic or legalistic but in religious terms; it is not primarily a deviation from abstract law but the rupture of a personal relation. The difficulty, of course, is that sin has become a worn-out word, used and abused down through the ages until its true meaning has become obscured. We need a new orientation if we are to restore its reality.

The first two studies, by Marc Oraison and Henri Niel, S. J., approach sin with an eye to contemporary psychological research. Without denying that psychological mechanisms to a great extent determine not only behavior but also reflexive reactions to behavior, it is still imperative, they argue, that the Christian understand the distinction between emotional reaction and spiritual realization. Though we recognize that a morbid feeling of sinfulness is a psychological aberration, we cannot ignore the fact that human moral action transcends any automatic behavioristic response to the environmental situation, that it cannot be understood in terms of either instinctive or inculcated reactions. Precisely here the emphasis on man's personal relation to God, as opposed to a moralistic subjection to abstract law, becomes important.

Much has been written in recent years, whether by psychologists or by "existential" philosophers, on "anxiety" as a human attitude. Father Niel acknowledges the importance of this concept, but he is quick to point out that there is such a thing as "justified anxiety," which is by no means neurotic. Recognizing, too, that one's interior psychical situation does have a significant effect on freedom of action, he points out that man's moral personality is still active in the development and assimilation of instinctive reactions. Psychological considerations may very well modify our notion of culpability in this or that situation, but they cannot altogether banish sin from the scene.

The third study, by Françoise Coudreau, is concerned with a pastoral problem to which the French in recent years have given considerable attention, that of introducing the child to the meaning of sin. Here again the psychological plays an important role, confirming our conviction that the negative approach to this problem is ill-advised. The "sense of sin" can and should be a healthy attitude, but it will not be if the initial contact with the concept is primarily in terms of "what is not to be done." Such an approach runs the risk of cultivating inhibitions instead of creating a positive attitude towards the mystery of God. To understand sin against the backdrop of love is unquestionably both more balanced and more realistic.

The last two essays are more properly theological, J. Baciocchi's approaching sin through the mystery of our Redemption, Gustav Siewerth's presenting a brief treatise on Original Sin. The former reiterates the theme of love in tracing the history of man's relationship to God—the aberrations which have broken

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the relationship and the divine act which reestablished it.

It is unfortunate that the book did not end with this fourth study, a fitting crown on the first three. Instead, the last essay, which is the longest of all, almost undoes the good work of the others. It is a thinly-disguised Scholastic "thesis" on Original Sin, more rhetorical than profound, unilluminated by contact with most recent investigations and insights in both theology and philosophy. In short, it is a long, abstract sermon which tends to make the reader forget how good the rest of the book has been.

Maritain on Art

Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry. By Jacques Maritain. Translated by Joseph W. Evans. Scribners. $5.

by Thomas P. McDonnell

THE PRESENT eminence of Jacques Maritain has an almost intimidating effect upon even those—one might say especially those—who may approach this newly re-issued classic with something less than the hushed demeanor of folded hands. Let it be said at once, therefore, that although the book is exquisite matter for philosophers of art, to the artist himself it is fairly irrelevant. Whatever else this statement may be—wrong-headed or crude in its apparent lack of intellectual discretion—it is neither lightly spoken nor presumptuous in its intent.

In any case, the situation is doubly anomalous: first, in the assumption that it is possible, from a reworking of "materials prepared by the Schoolmen," to compose "a rich and complete theory of art"; second, in the most unlikely prospect of attempting to dispute this assumption in a curt reduction of the Maritain range of esthetics. For the revision of *Art and Scholasticism*, including the equal status now given to *The Frontiers of Poetry*, is of a piece that came to final fruition in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. Although changes of attitude (rather than view) are clearly discernible in Maritain's concepts of, say, beauty and creativity, the total structure of his thought remains ordered toward a complete theory of art.

The question is of course, whether a complete theory of art is possible at all, let alone one built upon the Schoolmen and *les anciens*. But the definition of poetry which Maritain derives from the Greeks, even though not confined either to them or the Schoolmen, does not take into account anything like a full consideration of the relevance of poetry to other vital aspects of the Greek community and culture. This is a major deficiency, because it has the effect of inhibiting the definition at its source, and of restricting seemingly immutable principles to a preempted choice of conclusions. At any rate, applying Scholastic concepts to the evolution of poetry is much like applying Aristotelian physics to the nature of matter known to us today. This has led Maritain into the error of reducing art to *artisanism*, and of regarding modern poetry as a metaphysical aberration in the history of workmanship.

Finally, at a point which is hardly final in any sense, a word about translation. There is no question that this is a considerable improvement over the 1946 (London) edition, but one must still paraphrase Robert Frost: what is lost in the translation of prose is precision. For amusing example, chapter III in 1946 is entitled "Making and Action," in 1962 "Making and Doing;" and its opening one-sentence paragraph in 1946 begins with "The Mind . . ." and ends with "for the sake of doing," while in 1962 it begins with "The intelligence . . ." and ends with "for the sake of action." Whatever your choice, the rest is still choice Maritain.

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